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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 KABUL 002416

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SUBJECT: POST-ELECTION COMPACT: UNAMA'S ENGAGEMENT SUPPORTS
U.S. GOALS

Classified By: Polcouns Annie Pforzheimer, Reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

¶1. (C) Summary: SRSK Kai Eide's presentation at the UNAMA meeting on post-election engagement by the International Community with the Government of Afghanistan showed considerable fidelity to the U.S.-launched Post Election Compact consultative process. Eide noted that the international community should make its expectations of a new Afghan government clear, but must inspire, rather than impose on, the Afghans. Ambassadors assembled at the meeting were in general agreement. End summary.

¶2. (C) Speaking at the August 17 weekly UNAMA meeting, Eide noted to assembled Ambassadors that engagement with a new Afghan government must happen quickly after inauguration. The international community must use its time well to make its expectations clear, he said, and to communicate a joint strategy with new vision and new programs for the short and long terms to highlight basic issues for the new government. The SRSK stressed that this must not/not be seen as imposing on, but rather as inspiring, the new Afghan Government.

¶3. (C) Eide set forth five -- extremely familiar -- clusters of issues, reflecting the considerable communication he has had with the Embassy on our consultative process to date:

-- Sovereignty: He recalled the earlier rubric of Afghanization. This new focus would require the international community do things, and the new Afghan authorities to assume responsibilities as a sovereign state;

-- Peace and Reintegration: This is the old "reconciliation", a plan for how to move forward must be developed. All 41 presidential candidates spoke about reconciliation, which may please the "other side," Eide said, but Afghans should also praise the Afghan National Army. A need exists to rebalance the rhetoric so the new government is not seen as desperately running toward a reconciliation process. The vital need is to project strength;

-- Institution Building: Eide emphasized that we should spell out requirements for governance in a way that shows strategy, not just "bits and pieces," for both the Afghan and our own publics. We should also address rule of law, accountability, and corruption to form a national consensus on broader political arrangements;

-- Economic Development: The need is to project the impression that a strategy exists here, too; and

-- Afghanistan's Future Status in the Region: In the longer term, Afghanistan must have a status that inspires confidence in it within the region.

¶4. (C) After setting forth these clusters, Eide noted that inevitably countries, both around his table and outside, will want to host a conference. He argued for the need to hold off and leave that question to the next Afghan President so that he might have the option of a Conference in Kabul. Nothing, the SRSK argued, would better project the message of

engagement than to have a conference in the Afghan capital, though he acknowledged the difficulty of hosting 120 countries here. As for timing, in looking at the combination of the electoral calendar and the Afghan weather, he suggested some time in the First Quarter of the New Year that would give the Afghan new government time to prepare.

¶5. (C) Comments began with the Russian Ambassador who supported Kai Eide's points, singling out the first and second clusters. He asked about a national consensus and how the Taliban fit into that. Kai Eide clarified that the need is for an Afghan national consensus to be able to have talks with the Taliban and not to just see ethnic groups talking within themselves, Pashtun to Pashtun, for example. The Australian Ambassador expressed the hope to build on what has been done rather than start from scratch; Eide concurred. The Japanese Ambassador wondered if such a conference would be another donor meeting. Kai Eide replied that it would not be a donor meeting, but rather politically focused. The Indian Ambassador noted the need to reiterate international community support to Afghanistan. He also saw a need to make a distinction between such a conference and those in Paris and London. He agreed that the best part of Kai Eide's point is that no country would take initiatives but rather all would get together in Kabul.

¶6. (C) Ambassador Eikenberry emphasized that the compact under discussion was best one between the next Afghan president and his people. The international conference would be convened to add legitimacy to and support for the Afghan's own compact. He also noted that there are close linkages to the clusters. For example, discussions with the Afghans on

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national security that focus only on sovereignty (eg, building capable ANA and ANP) mean little without parallel dialogues on Afghanistan regional role and peace talks with the Taliban. The clusters that SRSG highlighted can be framed in terms of mutual obligations and responsibilities, in ways that are politically appealing to Afghan citizens (eg, "the return of full sovereignty").

¶7. (C) Among the group there was general agreement on accepting Eide's proposed way ahead, with an understanding that conversations among the participants would resume after the August 20 elections.

EIKENBERRY